Chapter - III

FACTORS AFFECTING SETTLEMENT GROWTH

1860 to 1947

3.0 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

In earlier discussion, it was mentioned that political factors such as raids by the Marathas in the 1740s or the rule by the Nawabs of Bengal and the chieftains, comparative economic stability in the spheres of agriculture and cottage industry affected the growth of settlements. The foreign traders like the Dutch, Portuguese, French and the British established many kuthis i.e., trade houses in connection with their trade, such as at Jangipur, Kasimbazar and Saidabad along the river courses. But from the mid-eighteenth century, the situation gradually turned critical. Population curves show irregular ups and downs (Map 3.1) and the study shows that physical as well as human factors were responsible for the uneven growth of population.

Table III.1 clearly brings to light that in 1901-31 period, 6 P.S. out of 29 P.S. showed considerable growth rate, 2 P.S. had almost stagnant growth rate, the rest 21 P.S. manifested negative growth rate (Map 3.1). The growth in some cases, e.g., in Lalgola, Bhagwangola, Raninagar, is attributed to their location along the
Map 3.1 Comparative study of growth rate of population, 1901-31 and 1951-81.
The decay of the rivers gave rise to a chain reaction. There was very little human effort to over-
come the natural catastrophies like drainage deterioration and consequent development of hygiene environment. Endemic malarial fever ravaged the countryside. This was responsible for sudden checks in the growth of population. Similarly, other factors such as decline in silk industry and diminishing trade helped in the emigration of local population and influx of tribal people in this decadent area. These factors are dealt with in this section.

3.1 PHYSICAL FACTORS - The role of rivers:

3.1.1 Inundation, insalubrity, famine and its effect on population growth - The effects of decaying drainages on agricultural performances are two-fold: (a) lesser productivity of soil due to lack of silt-laden water and (b) destruction of crops by inundation.

(a) Lack of silt-laden water and diminution in reproduction of soil fertility was noted in a letter of Revd. G. Schurr of Kapasdanga to the Magistrate of Nadia in 1867. In the Nadia Fever Commission's Report (1881), embanking the rivers and consequent exhaustion of soil...

3. In the words of Pringle and Kemm, "once an epidemic starts, it spreads like wild fire. The homesteads being so congested and the habits of the people being what they are, all the conditions are present for the rapid spread of infection" (Pringle, J.M., and A.W Kemm, op. cit., p. 15).
due to check of fertilising silt water was mentioned. Silting up of river channels and arrestation of silt-laden water caused a steady diminution of net cropped area and productivity of crops. The effect was scarcity of food in the years of distress.

(b) Due to meagre capacity of the rivers to carry excess water during floods, inundations were often caused. With the mouths of the khals in their natural condition, the water in the bil rose gradually, but when silted up, water only broke in at the height of a flood and thus filled the interior basin at once, to the destruction of the rice crop it might contain. Destruction of crops interfered seriously with the food supply of the people and retarded population growth.

(i) It is relevant here to study the relation between food shortage and health of the people. The Bengal Administration Report (1886-87) maintained: "the year 1886 has been healthier than the previous year". 32 out of 45 districts enjoyed good or fair health and only 13 districts showed signs of unhealthiness. "This satisfactory result is attributed to the good harvest and to the favourable ruling price of foodgrains. The abundant and well-distributed rainfall of the year has

4. Quoted from Bentley, C.A., op. cit., p. XXXVII.
produced beautiful harvests and has done much towards improving the health of the people" (p. 297). In another report, it was mentioned that in the year 1916 birth rate was high, while death rate had been lower. This was due to the fact that "rainfall was generally well distributed and ample in amount; the outturn of the rice crop on which the agricultural prosperity of the Presidency mainly depends, was good. As a result of these favourable natural conditions, there was an increase of population throughout the Presidency.\(^6\)

(ii) In the northern part of the study area, effect of flood havoc was not so destructive as in the south. The people living along the river Padma were accustomed to flood destruction\(^7\).\(^8\) (Plate 1). In Nadia

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7. A map in the Hooghly River and Its Headwaters, Vol. II (1919) published by the Govt. of Bengal shows that within a period 1822-23 to 1905-06, the river Padma oscillated from the north to south over an area of about 40 km. Map 2.2 showing evolution of settlements from 1921 to 1971 in the Raghunathganj P.S. vividly reflects the effect of swinging behaviour of the river Padma.

8. "In the lowlands near the Ganges, the houses are very temporary constructions. A light thatch and lighter walls, unraised sufficing for the wants of the inhabitants, who remove their property, house and all, as soon as the river waters rise high enough to top their charpoys (or native bedstead). During the inundation they may often be seen lying either too lazy to move or taking the chance of the water rising no longer and saving them the trouble of moving at all" (Gastrell, J.E., op. cit., p. 13).
district, spill water of the Bhagirathi usually entered on the north-west in Kaliganj P.S. and Tehatta P.S., swept through Chapra and Hanskhali P.S. in the south-easterly direction. On the retarded growth of population in the Hanskhali and Kaliganj P.S., the Census Report of Nadia (1891) commented, "abnormal falling off in Hanskhali and Kaliganj is undoubtedly due to the combined ravages of malaria and floods. They are especially subject to both".  

3.1.2 Landscape and distribution of population - Distribution of population was, to some extent, determined by sandy soil and marshy land. Police stations like Kaliganj, Nakasipara and Krishnakar of Nadia containing highly sandy soil and very sterile land (Plate 13) had very low density of population. Because of many depressions and insalubrious climate, Hanskhali and Ranaghat police stations had also low density.

3.1.3 Drainage deterioration, village economy and new settlement - With the gradual deterioration of the rivers, transport facilities and trade centres lost importance. Before the advent of railways, river transport was highly developed. The banks of the rivers were at one time lined

with thriving marts doing a brisk and extensive business in the country-produce and imported goods and affording convenient halting places for the fleet of country boats that had the monopoly of carrying trade of North Bengal and the Upper Provinces. Bhagwangola and Murshidabad were highly developed river markets. With the gradual silting up of the rivers, navigation became a difficult problem. But the most powerful factor in the diversion of trade and the consequent ruin of the old trade centres has been the railways. The Census Report of 1891 noted that railway bazars which came into existence, dealt chiefly in local produce and the 'study area' had lost a large share it had in the outside forwarding trade. This evidently led to the growth of settlements along the railway line rather than the rivers. One such example is Majdia. Some old settlements got an impetus with the introduction of roads including metalled roads. Karimpur is an example of the latter. This is to recall here that

10. Village Nokari (J.L. No. 160) of Ranaghat P.S. is an example of riverine port. It was situated on a khal that connected the river Churni with the Bhairab. The word Nokari was derived from Nauka, i.e., boat which indicates the importance of boat on the economic transaction of the village. Various merchandised goods were sent from this place to distant parts of the country. Many such instances can be cited, e.g., Bhagwangola, Kaliganj etc.

railways and roads contributed to the decay of rivers. In the pre-railway era, conditions favored widespread inundation, but following strengthening of embankments, the region was deprived of heavy flood water and river-borne silt. Moreover, these silts were deposited in the river beds, thus aggravating their decay.

3.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS:

Among the human factors, the following may be considered as significant: (a) Popular habits generated by ages of denial and impoverishment, (b) indifferent attitudes of the government, (c) zamindars and the zamindary system, (iv) economic factors.

3.2.1 Unhygienic condition of the villagers contributed largely to the spread of malarial fever and people's habits and superstitions aggravated the problem. "In every homestead there are ditches from which the earth has been dug to make the houses .... One homestead is very close to another ..... The houses have no windows. Every endeavour seems to be made to keep the sun and fresh air out ..... The insanitary surroundings of the people are rendered more insanitary by their unclean habits ..... The district (Nadia) is badly supplied with doctors and dispensaries but even if there were plenty of both, it is doubtful whether in the absence of a complete revolution in the people's way of life, they would avail much .....". For instance, "segregation
of cholera patients is impossible, the clothes they wear are washed in pool from which surrounding householders draw their water. The habit, which has grown up among the Hindus of the district (Nadia) of disposing off their dead by throwing the bodies into adjacent bils and khals is both repugnant to one's feelings and propriety and prejudicial to the public health. Cholera which usually breaks out at the beginning of the hot weather is due to the scarcity of clean water. Moreover, the sources of drink-


13. Khatian (records of right) data show that provision of pure drinking water was practically nil in the villages, only well-to-do persons possessed a well. The Settlement Survey Report (1925) of Jessore district shows that at that time there were 4 kuchha and 7 pucca wells in the Bangaon P.S. and 1 kuchha and 3 pucca wells in the Gaighata P.S. The population (1921) of the above P.S. were 85,16 and 33,532 respectively (Momen, M.A., 1925, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Jessore, 1920-24, Ben. Sec. bk. Depot, Cal., p. V).

14. According to Forbes, the villages lying in the interfluves of the Bhagirathi-Jalangi and Jalangi-Mathabhanga were the worst sufferers. In his own language, "some of the villages which suffer from drought are Debagram, Belogram and Mooragacha on the Bhagirathi river and the country between Hardee, Chuchrah, and Krishnahur on Jelleinghy river". In the former case, "the supply of water has been cut-off by the closing up of a large khall" which run through the whole of that part of the country and which supplied water to about twenty or thirty villages (Forbes' letter, dated Krishnahur, the 20th October, 1867, Selections, op. cit., p. 205-06).

15. To show the impact of water crisis on depopulation, (continued)
ing water are impure. Tanks, the usual source of water supply, were generally very dirty and weed grown. Moreover, the tanks were also used for washing and other domestic purposes. When river water was drunk it is "generally obtained at a spot which is also used as a bathing ghat".

Excess of foliage is one of the reasons for malarial fever, but the people did not care for that. "The destiny of the jungles which have grown up round some of the more or less deserted villages, is really astonishing. Use of mosquito nets was not in vogue. The public were superstitious in taking medicines. It was due to these habits that fever of any form broke out in an epidemic form and took a heavy toll of life."

This is to mention here that a survey regarding relative healthiness of the different parts of the study area was conducted in the year 1906-07 by the Drainage

(Foot note 15 contd.)

Forbes (1867 in Selections etc., op. cit.) compared the village population of Bholadangah, Baree, Panah, Jalsookha, Dogachia, Kancheooli, Belogaram and Mooragatcha (Nakasipara P.S.) in 1867 and a rough statement of number of inhabitants in them about 4 or 5 years ago and came to the conclusion that population in the above mentioned villages had considerably declined since then (p. 224).


17. For instance, outbreak of cholera in an epidemic form resulted in severe mortality in the years 1891, 1892 and 1896.
Committee. It maintained that those police stations in Nadia which showed average annual death rate of 35 and over were specially unhealthy and those with a corresponding rate of 30 and under were specially healthy. In Murshidabad, those police stations which exhibited a rate of 35 and under, were fairly healthy and those in excess of 40, reverse.  

3.2.2 The indifferent and hostile attitude of the administration towards local people was well-known. "Indian administration is very considerably influenced by the trend of public opinion in England and not by the opinion of the people of India" wrote R.C. Dutt. This will be apparent from the total neglect of the old irrigation system by the Government. In spite of demands to recover them they failed to clear obstructed drainages and khala for the supply of pure drinking water.

20. Prior to the Permanent Settlement Act (1793), the Khal-Kundi and Sayer taxes were raised to maintain the canals for irrigation and navigation purposes, but these were abolished since then (Mukharji, B.B., op. cit., p. 128).  
21. According to Willcocks, that by 1815, the zamindars and tenants of Central Bengal (undivided) had neglected the clearing of the canals and the repairing of the banks with the silt so cleared, a work known as 'Phulbandi' (Willcocks, W., op. cit., pp. 20-21).
water and so on.

(i) Maintenance of drainages was not a difficult task. The courses of dead rivers of Central Bengal were such that if water could be drawn from the parent river, they would be given a new lease of life. According to Willcocks, a sluice in the banks of the rivers and regulators at the heads of the canals were necessary. According to Bell (1869), this water difficulty was altogether an imaginary one. The country everywhere was intersected with khals and if the mouths of these khals were supplied with flood gates and closed when the rivers began to fall, an ample supply of water would be retained for the whole year.

Regarding resettlement of inhabitants from char areas to the interior, a letter no. 313 G.E., dated Calcutta, the 17th January, 1903 may be noted. "It appears however that no systematic steps are being taken to raise the sites of the houses above flood level and it is obvious that the amount of Rs. 3,600 will go a very little way towards raising the sites of the 4,142 houses with mat walls. Even this expenditure would have to be repaid. This is why the public 'prefer rebuilding their houses on old embankments, as they were unable to

22. Willcocks, W., op. cit., pp. 48-50; 
23. Selections, letter no. 1277, dated the 7th October, 1867.
repay advances"\textsuperscript{24}.

3.2.3 Zamindars and zamindary system - The old agrarian system of Bengal sharply declined under the Permanent Settlement Act, 1793. The hereditary rights of the zamindars were disregarded and because of arrear in revenue, many old zamindaries were sold in public auction. In case of raiyats, there was increasing loss of occupancy rights under this Act\textsuperscript{25}. The excessive demand of land revenue was causing unemployment among landlords, tenants, traders and manufacturers. The effect was that bands of unemployed soldiers, the armed retainers, the lathials of the zamindars and even many zamindars themselves took to robbery. The result of the depredations by these robbers was that many "fine places in Bengal were desolated, industry and trade decayed and cultivation declined"\textsuperscript{26}. Side by side, there

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{24} Letter No. 313 G.E., op. cit.
\textsuperscript{25} The general level of the rents of the statutory raiyats was low, but owing to subletting and the free right of transfer, the actual cultivators paid either full economic rent or half of the actual rent under the barga system. The rapid increase in the number of bargadars "is an indication of the extent to which the hereditary raiyats are losing their status and being depressed to a lower standard of living" (Government of Bengal, 1940 : Report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal, Vol. I, Ben. Sec. Bk. Depot, Cal., pp. 38-39).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{26} Sinha, J.C., op. cit., p. 100.
\end{flushleft}
grew up a large number of new zamindaries in Bengal. But the new zamindars were city capitalists and therefore absentees. Due to lack of their patronage, agriculture, philanthropic works as well as economic development of the villages came to a standstill. Their only concern was to raise as much money as they could from the raiyats. Various

33. It cannot be denied that the extension of cultivation since the Permanent Settlement has with few exceptions been the work of the actual cultivators rather than of the zamindars of a class (Report, Land Revenue Commission, Bengal, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 36).
34. Abandonment of market in Simulia and confectionaries at Nabla in Santipur (Sen, S., and J. Sen, 1978, op. cit., p. 39) due to lack of patronage of the zamindars and wealthy classes have been noted. Similar instance is observed at Anulia in Ramaghat P.S. The Rajas of Nadia patronised many Brahmans and Pandits. The decay of the fortunes of the Rajas had affected those communities.
35. In 1872, the rate of rent of Uthandi lands was about twice as high as that for leasehold lands, known as Jamai. Since then, the disparity had increased. In 1910, the rent rate of Uthandi land varied between Rs. 4/- and Rs. 8/- per bigha (Unpublished khatian records, Collectorate of Nadia). Land Revenue was high, whereas prices of foodgrains were low. Due to this anomalous condition, the cultivators were forced to transfer their lands to the zamindar through gomastas and were turned into landless raiyats. Such instances were reported from Narayanpur mauza (J.L. No. 13) of Kaliganj P.S. and Sahibnagar mauza (J.L. No. 48) of Krishnagar P.S. (Sen, J., 1980: Land Utilisation and Population Distribution in the Jalangi Basin, unpublished Ph.D. (Continued)
oppressions in connection with collection of revenue were mentioned in contemporary journals and newspapers. The land tenure policy, known as utbandi, was complicated and the tenants, in majority of the cases, had no rights over land-holding. Land tax was high whereas prices of agricultural commodities remained low. Demand for agricultural products was low. Moreover, a farmer had to fall back upon mahajam for loan.

3.2.4 Economic factors - Economic depletion was partly responsible for migration of a sizeable section of the population. In the words of Mukharji, "if the economic position can be improved health will also improve". But practically there were no incentive by the Government. Foreign competition had gradually ousted the local industries, such as silk of Murshidabad.

(Poost note 35 contd.)
Thesis, C.U., Cal., pp. 39-40) and Bhagirathpur mauza (J.L. No. 46) of Domkal P.S.

36. Tattwabodhini Patrika, the noted Bengali monthly, has dealt with eighteen different types of oppression of the zamindars on their raiyats. Collection of taxes from the raiyats is also a point of discussion. For details, see Tattwabodhini Patrika, Baisakh, 1772 Saka, Part 4, No. 81; Sraban, 1772 Saka, Part 5, No. 84; Agrahavan, 1772 Saka, Part 4, No. 88.

37. Most of the Nadia hats are very small affairs, centres of distribution for the most ordinary necessaries of life. They are not used as export channels except of gur (Pringle and Kemm, op. cit., p. 12).


39. In the words of Sinha, "a process of de-industrialization covers the years 1793-1833" (Sinha, N.K., 1970: The Economic History of Bengal, 1793-1848, Vol. III, (Continued)
popularly known as Baluchari silk, cotton weaving of
Santipur, known as Santipur Muslin and ivory carving
of Murshidabad. The brass-metal industry was still
important though it was largely affected by the inrush
of other wares. Conch-shell industry could survive
only in the primitive state. Fishing was one of the
main and subsidiary industries in the past. Bils
were common in this tract. But most of the bils were
filled up and some of them were brought under plough.
The supply of fish had also been reduced due to decay
of the Bhagirathi and other rivers. Moreover, the

(Foot note 39 contd.)
Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Cal., p. 1).

40. Due to decline in silk industry, persons depending
on that economy had left the locality of Raghunath-

41. An application from a spinner of Santipur shows how
the local cotton industry (cottage) had been ham-
pered by the inrush of foreign thread and clothes
made from cotton thread (for details, see Samachar
Chandrika, dated 22nd Paus, 1234 B.S.; 5th January,
1928).

42. "The world renowned ivory carving industry dates
back to the time when Nawabs of Bengal had their
courts at Murshidabad. It has been observed that
the decline of the Royal Court of Murshidabad is
synchronised with the deterioration of the ivory
carving industry..." (Mukharji, B.B., op. cit.,
p. 126, 129).

43. One such example is Arbandi village (J.L. No. 66)
of Santipur P.S. The villagers depended on fishing
which was easily available from the Anjana, a re-
distributary of the Jalangi. Since the deteriora-
tion of the river the villagers switched over to
agriculture while some others emigrated.
absence of good communication was a hindrance for production and despatch of various agricultural products.\textsuperscript{44,45}

Commenting on the economic situation of the study area, Census Report of Murshidabad (1891) made the following observation, "The fact is that the trade of this district as a whole has declined, with the result that the influx of up-country traders had come to an end and the interests of the people have become more and more agricultural.

To this cause may be traced the decay of urban life that has been going on uninterruptedly for many years, transferring the people from the towns to the country\textsuperscript{46}. But when agriculture itself was decaying how could it support a larger population? Under these circumstances, emigration was a natural consequence.

The factors discussed so far created an environment that helped in emigration of the people and the Census Report of 1921 maintained: "This stream of migration began to flow more than 40 years ago but has increased very much in volume since 1891 and appears still to

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{44} "The absence of good communication within Karimpur police station is stated to have discouraged the cultivation of special crops for export" (Pringle, J.M. and A.H. Kemm, op. cit., p. 17).
\item \textsuperscript{45} "The Kalantar is comparatively a fertile area and its potential exports are considerable. It would be of material service to the economic development of the district if the Meherpur-Plassey road could be properly maintained and rendered workable throughout the year" (Pringle, J.M. and A.H. Kemm, op. cit., p. 17).
\item \textsuperscript{46} Report on the Census of the District of Murshidabad, 1891, p. 2.
\end{enumerate}
be increasing"^{47}$ (Table III.2). This report contended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Col. I</th>
<th>Col. II</th>
<th>Col. III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Census 1901</td>
<td>Census 1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual population</td>
<td>16,58,281</td>
<td>13,33,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>59,010</td>
<td>71,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emigrants</td>
<td>1,23,737</td>
<td>78,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural population</td>
<td>17,23,008</td>
<td>13,40,784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Col. IV</th>
<th>Census 1921</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,87,527</td>
<td>12,62,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62,460</td>
<td>58,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,09,734</td>
<td>1,02,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,34,846</td>
<td>13,06,136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that emigrants from Nadia district were found in larger numbers in Jessore district compared to other neighbouring districts but migration across the Ganga to Rajshahi (Table III.3) and Pabna districts had been considerable

Table - III.3

Migration from Murshidabad and Nadia districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balance of migration</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad to Malda</td>
<td>9,308</td>
<td>7,162</td>
<td>20,232</td>
<td>13,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad and Nadia to Rajshahi</td>
<td>14,496</td>
<td>23,139</td>
<td>24,383</td>
<td>28,101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


and large numbers had gone to Twentyfour-Parganas, Murshidabad, Faridpur and Hugli districts. The balance of migration was against Nadia district in every direction though it was only slightly uneven between Nadia and Murshidabad Nadia districts. Large numbers of people were found in Calcutta where they were absorbed in industries, services etc. 48

Regarding emigration from Murshidabad district, the Census Report of 1921 observed: "The result of the 20 years (1901-1921) has been to make the number of emigrants now nearly twice as great as the number of immigrants. Partly this is due to the fact that immigration to the western parts of the district from the Santal Parganas and Birbhum has been stayed and the native-born children of immigrants have taken the places of their fathers, but the density of population is less now than it was 20 years ago, and that the proportion between immigrants

and emigrants has changed in this manner is significant of the deterioration in the reproductive capacity of the soil at the hands of a fever-stricken agricultural population. The figures for migration seem to indicate that Murshidabad suffers more severely even than Nadia from the evils which have come about by the decay of the distributary river system from the Ganges, the consequent fall in the subsoil water-level and its concomitant disabilities. Emigrants from Murshidabad go rather to Malda and Rajshahi than to neighbouring districts in other directions⁴⁹. This migration, according to Census Report of India, 1921 is partly due to diluviation of the Padma which erodes one bank and builds up another⁵⁰. Census Report further maintains that "a considerable number of people from Murshidabad and Nadia find their way as far as Dinajpur and even to Rangpur⁵¹.

The effect of emigration and mortality was felt in "shortage of labour" and deficiency of food crops (Table III.4). Land remained untilled and did not yield full

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement of population and agricultural situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of emigrants over immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia(undivided)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murshidabad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

crops. Moreover, some portions of cultivable areas as well as settlement sites were converted into jungles. Mukherjee noted close relation between depopulation and agriculture. He said that to meet the labour requirement, the agricultural tribes had moved into these decadent areas. But the agricultural proficiency of the aboriginal tribes was "much less" and though fallow land was being taken up for cultivation, agricultural decline had not been checked at all with the result that in some of the more decadent areas, land fit for cultivation often remained untitled and tended to be covered with jungle and there was more land than there were cultivators. Thus, stagnancy was created in the agricultural sphere of the area where the soil was gradually becoming infertile on account of the gradual silting up of the river channels.

52. The indirect effect of malaria on the agricultural prospects of the country is disastrous. "The people are diseased and lazy. The result is that their fields remain half ploughed and cattle are not properly attended to and the yield of crops is in consequence very poor. There is a dearth of labour everywhere and the lands do not get proper treatment. A lot of land lies fallow and those that are cultivated do not yield full crops" (Momem, M.A., op. cit., p. 21).

3.3 CONCLUSION:

Summing up the present chapter, the following observations may be noted.

The period witnessed a decline of population in many police stations. Among the factors, the role of rivers was most important. Lesser productivity of soil, destruction of crops by flood, scarcity of drinking water and endemic malarial fever resulted from drainage deterioration. In the economic side, there were evils of Permanent Settlement, high rent value of land and decline in silk trade. The factors discussed above created an environment that helped in emigration of the people from villages to towns. Effect of mortality and emigration was felt in shortage of labour and deficiency in food crops. Land remained untilled and did not yield full crops. Moreover, some portions of cultivable areas and settlement sites were converted into jungles.

So far the factors hampering the growth of settlements have been studied. In the subsequent chapter, factors affecting growth of settlements in the post-independence period will be studied. Impact of depopulation and overpopulation on the rural landscape will also be studied in detail.